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THE practicableness of getting oil among ourselves at a moderate expence, and the importance of using it fresh, together with the probable uses of sun-flower oil for varnishes, for the basis of ointments, and for mixing of paints, as well as other purposes to be answered by oils in general, claim our attention to this subject, and encourage further trials of the like kind.

BEFORE we quit this subject, it may not be amiss to mention, that castor oil is justly celebrated for its medicinal qualities : The plant, from the seeds of which it is got, may be easily cultivated in this country, and the encrease of it is very great in a short time ; might it not then be worth the attention of our farmers to propagate this plant, for the sake of its oil ? We would just suggest, that perhaps it might be worth while to try whether the seeds of sumach, with which this country abounds, or of the mullen, which grows in old fields, and bears a great quantity of seed, would not yield, by expression a valuable oil for medicine, or other purposes.

*Mr. JOHN MOREL's Letter, with a Keg of BENE SEED.
Read before the Society, May 20, 1769.*

Savannah, 5th May, 1769.

*To Mr. CHARLES THOMSON, Secretary of the American
Philosophical Society, at Philadelphia.*

S I R,

I SEND you a small keg of Bene or Bene Seed, which you will please to present to your Society for their inspection. This seed makes oil equal in quality to Florence, and some say preferable. Some say one hundred weight of seed will produce ninety pounds of oil, others say less, be that as it will, it certainly makes very fine oil, and produces amazingly. If it is put to the trial, care should be taken to have the press well cleaned, so as leave no tincture from what may have been

already pressed; in my opinion, this is an article of consequence, and I believe it will grow in Philadelphia. The way to sow it is in holes about three feet asunder, dropping in each hole about ten grains; when it comes up, thin it to three or four of the most promising, the seeds will appear in pods about September, and should, when full grown, and before dry, be gathered in. The method is as follows: As soon as you perceive about three-fourths or four-fifths of the pods rise on the stalk, and the lower pods begin to lose their seeds, it is then time to take it in; for after that, as much as ripens one day a top, so much falls out of the pod at bottom, you take a sharp hatchet bill or some such weapon, and with it cut off the flock twelve to eighteen inches below any of the seed, holding the flock with the left hand; and when cut, a second person receives it, keeping it upright, till he has his load, for if you turn it downwards the ripe seed will fall out of the pods, you may immediately carry it into a barn, and set it upright on a close floor till you perceive all the pods fully dry and open. (You may, if you chuse, leave it in the field, which must be the case if a large quantity is planted,) then thresh it, and run it through a proper sieve, and it is fit for use.

I AM quite unacquainted with the method of expressing the oil, but I believe if it is designed for table use, nothing should be done to the seed, as it might give it an ill taste. The lighter and dryer the soil is in which it is planted, the better.

I am,

Dear S I R,

Your most humble Servant,

JOHN MOREL.

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